Preliminary bat roost assessment

Site Location	7 Cockney Hill, Tilehurst, Reading RG30 4HF
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Validity of data

The findings of this study are valid for a period of 24 months from the date of survey. If works have not commenced by this date, it may be necessary to undertake an updated survey to allow any changes in the status of bats on site to be assessed, and to inform a review of the conclusions and recommendations made.

Executive Summary

Chase Ecology undertook a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) at the named site. The aim of the assessment was to consider the value and suitability of the structures for roosting bats & nesting birds as detailed below;

Survey Methodology	An internal & external survey was carried out by Scott Latham for the potential roosting and usage of the structure for bats & nesting birds. See section 3 (Methodology). Additional to the visit further research has been carried out on the Magic.gov database and National Biodiversity Network
Results of Preliminary Bat Roost Inspection	SEE SECTION 6.0 Following a preliminary bat roost assessment it has been identified that the surrounding environments offer value to bats. A 2km search of previous Granted European Protected Species Applications revealed one granted European Protected Species applications for Common Pipistrelle, Brown Long-eared bats. A 2km radius search has demonstrated habitats of value to bats including woodland, parkland, open fields, hedgerows and waterbodies of which support feeding & commuting. The building has evidenced no suitable features of value to bats where the proposed development works shall take place. No internal evidence of bat was identified both internally or externally.
Evidence of Nesting Birds	No evidence of nesting birds identified
Requirements for Additional Survey	In line with current accepted guidelines no further assessment for bats will be required. However, as both records for bats and suitable habitats commonly used by bats for both feeding and commuting were observed locally a level of protection must be implemented to prevent disturbance. See Appendix 4: Protection See Appendix 2: Bat Conservation Trust flow chart

	See Appendix 3: Description of the categories used to assess a building or tree's bat roost potential and the survey effort required to determine the likely presence or absence of bats
Predicted Impacts of Development on Bats and Nesting Birds	No impacts to bats or nesting birds if all protection methods within appendix four are implemented during development. See Appendix 4: Protection
Mitigation and Compensation of Proposed Impacts	None identified.
Licensing Requirements for Bats	None identified.
Required Actions	See section 6.0 See Appendix 4: Protection

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1.0 Introduction

Brief

1.1 This report will present the findings of a preliminary bat roost assessment and nesting bird survey of the named site and further research of the area online.

Site description

1.2 A two storey detached dwelling, see section 5.0 images.

2.0 Legislation

2.1.1 All British bats are classed as European Protected Species and therefore receive protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, making it an offence to:

- Deliberately kill, injure or capture a bat;
- Deliberately disturb bats;
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place

2.1.2 In addition, all British bats are also listed under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) which contains further provisions making it an offence to intentionally or recklessly Obstruct access to any structure or place which any bat uses for shelter or protection; or Disturb any bat while occupying a structure or place which it uses

2.1.3 If proposed development work is likely to destroy or disturb bats or their roosts, then a licence will need to be obtained from Natural England, which would be subject to appropriate measures to safeguard bats.

2.1.4 In the UK, the provisions of the Birds Directive are implemented through the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended). All wild birds, their nests and eggs are protected it an offence to: • kill, injure, or take any wild bird; • take, damage or destroy the nest of any such bird whilst it is in use or being built; or • take or destroying an egg of any such wild bird.

2.1.5 Special protection against disturbance during the breeding season is also afforded to those species listed on Schedule 1 of the Act.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 All reporting undertaken by Mr Garry Smith who is an experienced licensed bat ecologist in England [Class 2 registration 2017-28032-CLS-CLS] with over 9 years' experience practical of professional ecological surveys.

3.2 Preliminary roost assessments can be undertaken throughout the year and can provide conclusive results, which can save expense and time for Planning Applicants. The optimum time to investigate for the presence of bats is during their active season when signs of presence can be more easily located.

3.3 A thorough interior and exterior inspection of the building for bat roosting and potential roosting features was undertaken. Signs surveyed for included droppings, dead bats, feeding remains (beetle, moth and butterfly remains), urine staining and grease marks around crevices and down walls, and any noises such as scratching and audible bat calls.

3.4 During the survey, the surrounding area was assessed in relation to suitable habitat that may be of value to bats.

3.5 Surveys were conducted following "The Bat Workers Manual "(JNCC 2004), "The Bat Mitigation Guidelines" (EN 2004) and the Bat Conservation Trust 'Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines' (2016) recommendations.

3.6 All areas of the building internally were inspected with the aid of a 2 million c/p lamp and inspection camera. External features were also inspected where possible and observations were aided with binoculars where needed.

3.7 A desk top survey was also completed to establish the biodiversity of the area along with its habitat structures including statutory and non-statutory designations

3.8 Biological records were not obtained for this survey

4.0 Results

Desk Study
Environmental record search

4.1 A data search from freely available resources was undertaken to assess the names species for distribution/record within a 2km study area which demonstrated records for;

- Common Pipistrelle

4.2 **Designated sites;**
Statutory (2km)

Site	Designation	Distance (km)	Direction
LOUSEHULL COPSE	LNR	0.75	NE
BLUNDELLS COPSE	LNR	0.85	NW
ROUND COPSE	LNR	1.25	N

Non-Statutory (2km)

Site	Designation	Distance (km)	Direction
NON-IDENTIFIED			

Priority Habitat Inventory within 2km

HABITAT	Distance (km)	DIRECTION
DECIDUOUS WOODLAND	0.40	SW
WOODPASTURE & PARKLAND	0.40	SW
DECIDUOUS WOODLAND	0.70	E
DECIDUOUS WOODLAND	1.00	N
DECIDUOUS WOODLAND	1.60	S

None of the above names sites/locations would be effected in any way from the proposed development plan for this site, including both habitats and species.

4.3 Aerial photographs of the site were consulted to determine if there are important landscape features surrounding and within vicinity of the site.

4.4 A 2km search of previous Granted European Protected Species Applications revealed one granted European Protected Species applications for Common Pipistrelle, Brown Long-eared bats.

Field study

4.5 The Preliminary Roost Assessment for bats was carried by Garry Smith [Class 2 registration 2017-28032-CLS-CLS] where the dwelling and surrounding areas were assessed for the possible usages of bats & birds.

External	Features of value to bats	Notes
External Stonework	No	The render coverings to the structure have demonstrated a fair level of condition with no observed features of value to bats noted.
Window/door frames	No	No gaps or features of value to bats were observed within or surrounding the door/window frames throughout the property.
Eaves coverings	No	No gaps of adequate proportion to offer access or roosting value was observed throughout.
Roof coverings	No	No observed features of value to bats were observed within the roof coverings throughout the property.

Internal	Features of value to bats	Notes
Membrane coverings	Unknown	The roof void spaces have been converted into further living spaces.
Evidence from bats	No	No observed evidence from bats to include both droppings or feeding remains during the assessment visit.
Restrictions	No	Full access available during the survey.

Limitations

4.6 Many species of bat in the UK are crevice dwelling, and signs of bats and bats themselves can be difficult to find within a building or within areas that are inaccessible such as the gaps within roof coverings, eves and cavities within the stonework's.

5.0 Plans & Photographs

Image 1 – Front South facing elevation of the property

Image 2 – Rear North facing elevation of the property

Image 3 – Internal view from within the 1st floor areas which has been converted into further living space

6.0 Conclusion and recommendations

All recommendations provided in this section shall be on Chase Ecology's current understanding of the site proposals and current planning application, correct at the time the report was compiled. Should any aspect of the proposals alter, the conclusions and recommendations made in the report should be reviewed to ensure that they remain appropriate

6.1 Following a preliminary bat roost assessment it has been identified that the surrounding environments offer value to bats.

6.2 A 2km search of previous Granted European Protected Species Applications revealed one granted European Protected Species applications for Common Pipistrelle, Brown Long-eared bats.

6.3 A 2km radius search has demonstrated habitats of value to bats including woodland, parkland, open fields, hedgerows and waterbodies of which support feeding & commuting.

6.4 The building has evidenced no suitable features of value to bats where the proposed development works shall take place.

6.5 No internal evidence of bat was identified both internally or externally.

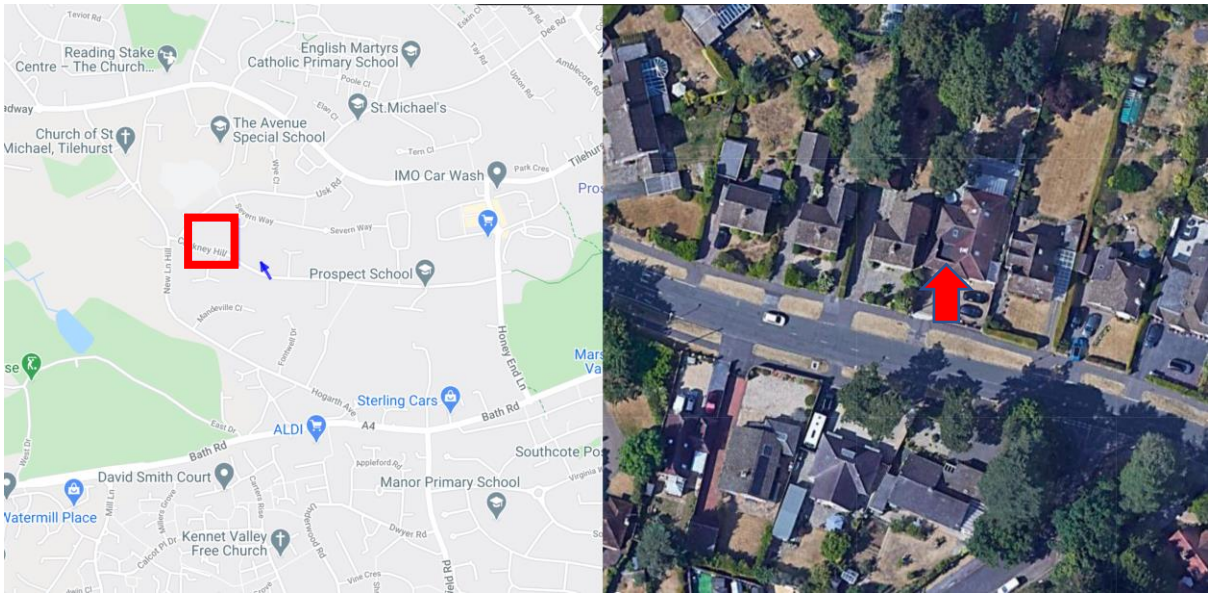
6.6 In line with current accepted guidelines no further assessment for bats will be required. However, as both records for bats and suitable habitats commonly used by bats for both feeding and commuting were observed locally a level of protection must be implemented to prevent disturbance.

See Appendix 4: Protection

7.0 References

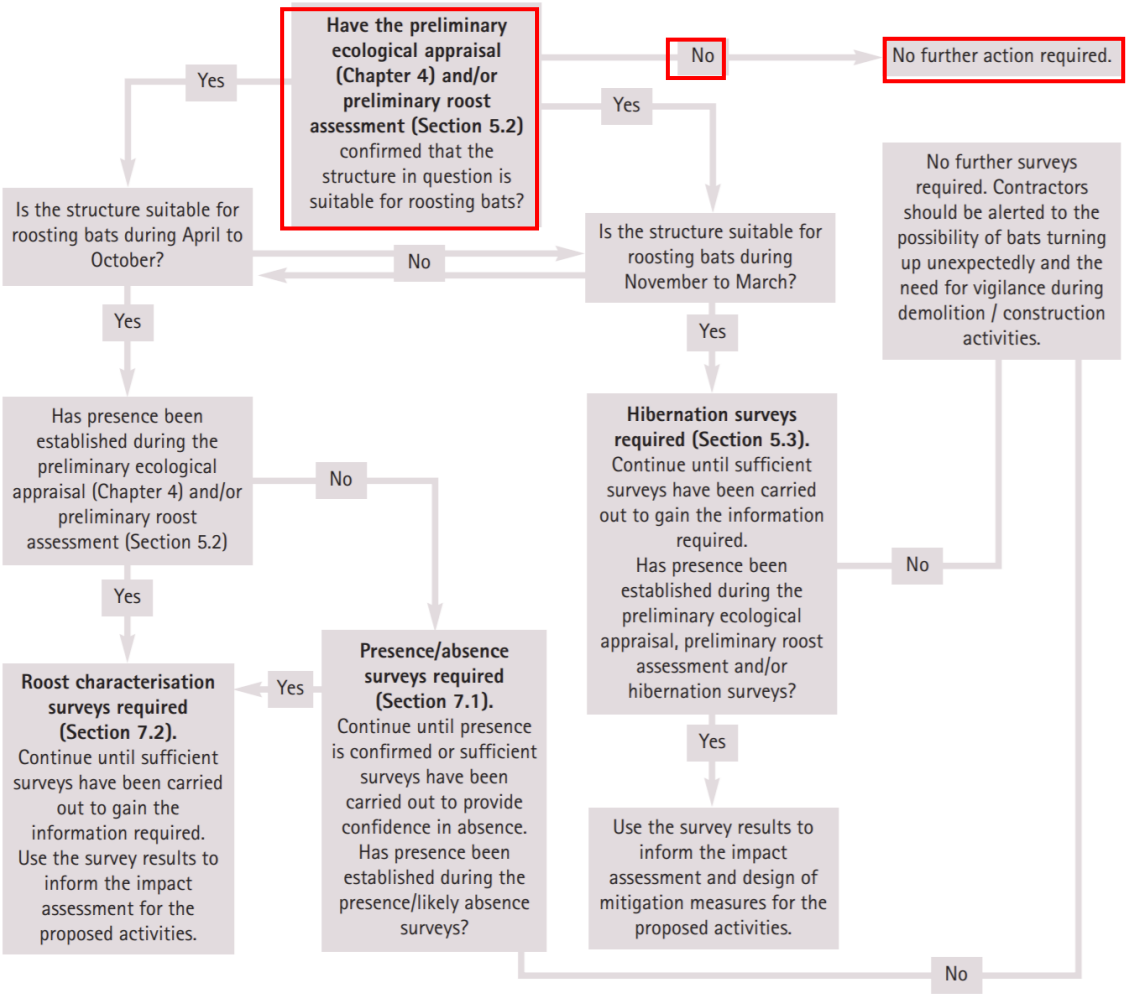
- Mitchell-Jones, A.J, & McLeish, A.P. Ed., (2004) 3rd Edition Bat Workers' Manual. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough.
- Collins, J. (ed.) (2016). Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists —Good Practice Guidelines, 3rd edition, Bat Conservation Trust, London.Mitchell-Jones, A.J. (2004) Bat Mitigation Guidelines. Natural England, Peterborough.
- British Trust for Ornithology (2016) www.bto.org/
- Magic database (2017) http://www.magic.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx accessed on 08/03/2017.
- Google Earth (2017)

Appendix 1: Location plan



Appendix 2: Below flow chart taken from the Bat Conservation Trust, Good Practice Guidelines used when assessing the suitability of a structure and any additional survey requirements.

Figure 5.1 Flow chart illustrating the process used to establish which types of surveys are necessary for roosts in structures.



Note on Figure 5.1: In some situations bats may use the same structure throughout the year and in these situations, both arms of the flow chart need to be fully considered.

Appendix 3: Description of the categories used to assess a building or tree's bat roost potential and the survey effort required to determine the likely presence or absence of bats

Negligible	Negligible habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats.	No further surveys required.
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity or hibernation) A tree of sufficient size and age to contain features but with none seen from the ground or features seen	One dusk emergence or pre-dawn re-entry surveys between May and August.
Moderate	A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only i.e. irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).	Two surveys, comprising one dusk emergence and a separate pre-dawn re-entry surveys between May and September with at least on between May and August.
High	A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat.	Three dusk emergence and/or pre-dawn re-entry surveys between May and September. Optimum period May – August. Two surveys should be undertaken during the optimal period and at least one survey should be a pre-dawn survey
Confirmed	Bats or evidence of bats found.	Surveys would be required to establish the status of the roost. Generally, three dusk emergence and/or pre-dawn re-entry surveys between May and September. Optimum period May – August (two surveys should be undertaken during the optimal period and at least one survey should be a pre-dawn survey).

Appendix 5: Protection

This document must be available to all involved in the planned development. All contractors must aware of the potential of protected & priority species being found on site and care should be taken during works to avoid harm (including during any tree works), if protected species are found then all work should cease and an ecologist should be consulted immediately.

Lighting

It is advised that all works should be carried out during the hours of daylight to further reduce the levels of disturbance caused to bats and other nocturnal wildlife in the surrounding environment.

It is recommended that during the development process the levels of lighting such as security floodlighting and lighting around working platforms if any should be limited to reduce the level of disturbance caused to bats which have been recorded locally.

Disturbance caused by high power lighting can cause disturbance to common commuting and foraging areas currently used by bats.

Nesting Birds

Although no nesting activities were demonstrated within the building where development will take place consideration and protection must be implemented during March to September to prevent disturbance.

If nesting birds are identified within the building during this time which may face disturbance from any planned works the client should seek advice from an experienced ecologist.

Protection of Wildlife During the development

All excavations if any should be closed where possible during the hours of darkness to prevent entrapment of wildlife such as mammals which may use the site during the hours of darkness for commuting & foraging.

For excavations which require to be left open a shallow slope should be in place to aid escape.

Any pipes over 200mm in diameter should be capped off at night to prevent animals entering.

The site should remain is a tidy fashion with waste materials removed daily to prevent any use from wildlife as an au natural refugia.